

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 249

IR 058 897

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TITLE School Library Systems: Developing Handbooks for Use at the System Level?
PUB DATE 2003-06-00
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Crimea Annual International Conference (10th, Sudak, Crimea, Ukraine, June 7-15, 2003).
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative (142) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; Learning Resources Centers; *Library Guides; Library Networks; *Library Policy; *Library Services; Material Development; Professional Development; School Districts; *School Libraries
IDENTIFIERS *Library Procedures

ABSTRACT

This presentation investigates the various kinds of services that are needed in school library systems. It relates to the leadership style and organizational needs for small, medium, and large systems at district, regional, or state levels. The content addresses some of the components of the print versions of school library system handbooks and the electronic versions of system policies and practices that are currently models in the field, including: (1) philosophy of education; (2) policies; (3) vision statement; (4) goal statements; (5) program components related to information literacy, independent learning skills, resource based learning, cooperative planning and teaching, literacy/literary and cultural appreciation, information and reference services, materials production and editing skills, media and electronic technology skills, inter-agency collaboration, advocacy/leadership/communication skills, organization and administrative functions, professional growth and development, assessment and evaluation processes, and research activities; (6) curriculum and instructional components; (7) procedures, including local policy statements, standardized processes, forms used in the system, and reports and reporting; (8) inter-agency collaboration; (9) professional development options; and (10) supporting documents. Special attention is given to the kinds of materials that are appropriate for each media. Methods of developing the materials to gain maximum commitment from the field workers are addressed. (Author/MES)

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Tenth International Conference << Crimea 2003 >>

Republic of Crimea, Ukraine

June 07 – 15, 2003

School Library Systems:

Developing Handbooks for Use at the System Level ?

Presenter

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Abstract

Title: School Library Systems: Developing Handbooks for Use at the System Level

This presentation is designed to investigate the various kinds of services that are needed in school library systems. It will relate to the leadership style and organizational needs for small, medium and large systems at district, regional or state levels. The content will address some of the components of the print versions of Handbooks and the electronic versions of System Policies and Practices that are currently models in the field. Special attention will be given to the kinds of materials that are appropriate for each media. Methods of developing the materials to gain maximum commitment from the field workers will be addressed. Samples of various kinds of handbooks and guides will be exhibited. Participants will be invited to share their observations on the processes under discussion.

Being a leader in modern educational society requires a certain amount of insanity. Changes are occurring so quickly that it is impossible to keep up with all of them. If the leader does not keep up, some one else takes over. Or do they ? **Leadership** is not a dance, but rather a symphony. Each player makes a unique contribution, under the wise guidance of a knowledgeable and sometimes charismatic individual.

However, in order for the symphony to perform well, all players need to be reading from the same **score**. The leader (or the conductor) must begin with a **VISION** of what is important in life, in education, and in school librarianship (SLIS) for both the individual and the system. With a clear conception of the totality of an integrated school library and information services (SLIS) program, and being able to enunciate that perception to the followers, gives any leader a solid base from which to develop the staff, the program, and the services.

The wise leader will know that the effective SLIS system must have dreamers, planners, feelers, and doers working in a team. The development of system **GOALS** and methods to reach those goals requires all these different personalities. The System Handbook for SLIS is the record of the direction the music has taken, and will take as different instruments are added. Modern technology can be a tool that helps one achieve these ends. One must remember that the "end" and the "means" are both important dynamics. Life is not a destination; it is a journey.

Where there are strong SLIS programs around the world, there are indications of quality leadership at various levels. There are many different kinds of SLIS systems: National (Ministerial), Regional, District, and School Building Level. All have unique roles to play. All must work in harmony and consistence of understanding of the rationale for library and information services in school settings. There have been dynamic changes in these perceptions and understandings over the past decade.

Purposes of the Handbook

1. The Handbook must carry a clear statement of the **PHILOSOPHY** of education for the jurisdiction. From this basic statement, the concept of the SLIS evolves. If the system is teacher centred, one type of service will be expected. If the system is child centred, a significantly different quality of service will evolve. The beliefs expressed in the handbook will represent the **stakeholders** in the community and the country.

2. **POLICIES** of the organization will represent the Legal Basis for SLIS. They may show who is responsible for what aspects of the implementation of the program. The following topics are often stated in policies from the ultimate authority

- 2.1 Budget: development and control
- 2.2 Staffing: recruitment, supervision, evaluation, standards
- 2.3 Facilities: standards, and processes for development
- 2.4 Collection: standards, and procedures for evaluation and development
- 2.5 Technology: relationship to all other factors
- 2.6 Evaluation: program implementation, and related physical resources

In some cases, these policies are stated only generally at the highest level, and local authorities are expected to develop local policy statements appropriate to the local circumstances. E.g. state-level policies, district-level policies

3. The **VISION** statement will reflect the rationale for having SLIS, and how SLIS will be a vehicle for achieving the educational goals. In some systems the **MISSION** statement can be used to briefly state the "raison d'être".

Sample from Canada. Burnaby School District 2002

The school library resource center program enables students to become literate, independent life-long learners.

Sample from Canada. Winnipeg School Division 1992

The mission of the WSD Library Media Services Program is to work cooperatively with the staff in providing learning experiences, resources and facilities which

-ensure that students can effectively locate, comprehend, analyze, question and communicate ideas and information in the pursuit of independent life-long learning; and encourage literary and cultural appreciation; and nurture creativity; and promote the enjoyment of reading, viewing and listening.

4. **GOAL STATEMENTS** will give specific representation of what is to be done, by whom, when, where, and how achievement will be measured. These are the working framework for all implementation activities. It is from these statements that the budget should be developed annually.

5. **PROGRAM COMPONENTS** This topic is an analogy the 'music score' with which we started. The leader – School Library Consultant, Chief Library, Director of School Library Services, Information Services Officer, Director of Information Services – (the names vary greatly, even with the same country) – is the person who is expected to develop the statement of program definition as a major part of the Handbook document.

The Program Components are the most important aspect of the HANDBOOK. They set the framework for the SLIS program expectations. They are the justification for having a school library integrated into the educational program of the school. These components show how a SLIS program is more than a set of teaching skills. The processes focus in the SLIS program should permeate all activities in the school.

5.1 **Information Literacy** is the ability to **recognize the need** for information to **solve problems and develop ideas; pose important questions; use a variety of information gathering strategies; locate** appropriate information; **assess relevancy** and evaluate information for quality, accuracy, authority and authenticity.

5.2 **Independent Learning Skills** involve the **location, analysis, comprehension and synthesis** of information. They are the skills of problem solving, critical thinking, and information access that makes it possible for an individual to become an independent learner. As the synthesis skills are developed, learners are able to express their own ideas in what they

record, report or demonstrate to others. All the kinds of skills that make accessing digital and visual data electronically viable are integrated in this component.

5.3 Resource Based Learning and is that which adds value to the collection in the direct support of the curriculum. The teacher-librarian is in a central position to help classroom teachers develop the knowledge of **information sources**, the **processes of learning**, and the relationship to **individual learning styles**. To implement child-centred resource-based investigation and learning is the key to quality education.

http://www.stf.sk.ca/prof_growth/ssc/ssl/4thr.htm

5.4 Cooperative (or Collaborative) Planning and Teaching is the building of relationships within the school community. Teacher-librarians generate opportunities to work with colleagues to implement the goals of the curriculum. Some of the teaching will be done independently by the teacher or teacher-librarian. Some will be done in a team in either the library or the classroom. The main focus will be the **planning** so that each team member understands their role as a **teacher** and **mentor** for the students. Strategies for **assessment and evaluation** at several stages in the teaching / learning process are important.

5.5 Literacy / Literary and Cultural Appreciation Skill Development is more than learning how to read and write. Literacy is a **personal act of making one's own meaning** from all aspects of communication, literature and the arts.

LCA begins with **reading guidance** and other promotion activities. This aspect includes storytelling, booktalks, discussion, and exhibits.

At a higher level of involvement, lessons and activities are designed to incorporate **appreciation skills** such as: Authorship, Illustration, Production; Techniques of Form, and Levels of Interpretation. The component relates well to Language Arts and Social Studies classes.

Skills in the **creative response** to all media include oral responses, visual responses (including authorship), and multi-disciplinary creations. An immersion in literature makes it possible for the individual to develop one's own communication style, and a personal perspective on the broader dynamics of life

In this broadest sense it incorporates information literacy, media literacy, and visual literacy. The focus of language development is the process of acquiring, extending and refining one's use and understanding of language through listening, speaking, reading, writing, viewing and representing.

5.6 Information and Reference Services combines the access to information from the broadest range of sources. It includes **print tools**, **multi-media resources**: Internet, databases, CD ROM technology, and visual media. This service aims to help students learn how to access **digital and human resources** both in the school and through other agencies and sources to meet their specific needs.

5.7 Materials Production and Editing Skills address the issue of helping students learn how to represent their knowledge and to communicate the changes in their attitudes and behaviour to others. This is the stage that helps them move their learning from **compilation**

skills to **comprehension** and **interpretation levels**. Their presentation skills can be widely enhances through the use of various media.

5.8 Media and Electronic Technology Skills have opened up a whole new range of options for learners. Technology is certainly a tool that can facilitate learning. It must be viewed as an adjunct to other resources in the school, and , as such, supports and enhances curriculum and instruction. **Multi-media, computational, and communicative technologies** enable teachers to accommodate individual learning styles and rates of learning thereby creating greater equity of opportunities for all learners. To be able to access information from a variety of sources is only a beginning step. To be able to relate that information to personal problems and situations is another phase. To develop the skills to demonstrate relevance of the information to the world around them, makes for **creative and critical learners**.

5.9 Inter-Agency Collaboration shows the ability of the school to involve other agencies in the education process, whether it be access to resources, work experience projects, human interactions, and shared use of facilities. As the school reaches out to other agencies, the community becomes more supportive of the changes and new directions in modern education.

5.10 Advocacy – Leadership – Communication Skills

With the shift in direction for modern SLIS, there is a need for a while new range of skills for the library staff. It is now possible to advocate for change in the educational programs in the schools. As the library staff interact with the teachers in an educational mode, then new leadership roles evolve. The ability to communicate meaningful with the teaching staff will provide great dividends for the students and for the SLIS program in the school.

5.11 Organization & Administrative Functions are all the **staff, resources & facilities** that come together in a meaningful fashion. The walls of the traditional library have moved. The library must change to a child-centred, learning-centred facility, with close communication with both teachers and students. The potential is phenomenal. **Differentiated staffing** includes roles for teachers, technologists, and clerks. **Facilities management** provides for flexible access to all **storage spaces, interaction spaces and work spaces**.

5.12 Professional Growth and Development is what is needed to make this paradigm shift work. One simple exposure will not be enough for most people to shift their perspective. Three stages are involved: changes in **knowledge, attitudes and demonstrated behaviour**.

However, with training sessions lead at the district-level by a process oriented leader, the school building level staffs will begin to see small steps that they can take to incorporate many of these program components into their range of vision.

Parallel to the sessions for the SLIS staff, it is important that an active campaign be undertaken to help the **administrators understand** the new directions. This can best be done one-on-one by the SLIS Director and the school teacher librarian.

Modeling is the best way to help teachers see how the shift will be beneficial to them. Enlisting the assistance of the Methodological and Pedagogical Consultants in the system will make this work move much more easily and quickly.

It takes time and patience to case these changes in thinking to take root.

5.13 Assessment & Evaluation Processes must be on-going. They are linked to the original **goal statements** discussed (no. 4 above) It is important that the school library personnel have a part in designing the evaluation instruments. The results from annual reports, progress reports, visitations, and other informal assessments should all be taken into consideration for

planning future professional development opportunities; refining the next year's goals; and developing proposals for budgets, projects, and other initiatives

A variety of **rubrics** need to be developed in collaboration with the teachers to help students see the different levels of expectation for marks. This can relate to the different levels of skill development, as well as the matching acquisition of knowledge.

5.14 Research Activities take on new opportunities as teachers and administrators begin to see new ways of approaching education. Close collaboration with colleges of education and universities will make it possible to conduct action-based research projects in the school. From time to time additional funds may be located to assist in such research activities.

5. CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTIONAL COMPONENTS provides an opportunity to showcase the various aspects of the Program Components detailed above.

This section of the Handbook holds probably the greatest change of all, as modern SLIS move into the mainstream of education. As education shifts to a more child-centred approach, the concept of developing **information literacy** in all students takes priority. It is based on the premise that students must become information literate to be able to survive when 'drowning in the sea of information.'

When one combines **Independent Learning Skills** with **Resource-Based Learning** in a **Cooperative Planning model**, there are powerful forces at work to meet the goals of any curriculum and any examination structure. As two teachers (classroom and library) join forces to work with individuals, small groups, and whole classes, there is great **potential to develop critical thinkers and creative learners**.

As these components are studied and understood by the SLIS staff, they will attempt projects with approachable teachers. As the teachers become more comfortable with this new teaching team members, they will be willing to expand the options in new planning modes. The wise teacher librarian will record the information on a planning form for sharing and future reference. Each successful project, unit or activity will add to the data bank.

The wise Director will find ways to have these teacher-librarian and teacher teams share their successful projects at SLIS professional development sessions, and /or at the Heads of Department or Content Areas discussion meetings. Consultants or Advisors can be encouraged to use similar processes.

There are a wide variety of **problem solving and planning models** in the literature. Probably the most popular model in America is The BIG 6 model developed by Michael Eisenberg and Bob Berkowitz.. It is widely accessible at <http://www.big6.com/> Each district really does need to adopt its own model, or adapt one from another jurisdiction. It is imperative that there be a common model used in the system, so that students moving from one level to another have a common pattern of addressing problem solving situations.

The best Handbooks have a section, which defines the program component, describes what it "looks like" in action, and offers 'suggested strategies for implementation'. The degree to which these factors are addressed will be the best indicator of how the success of the program can be assessed.

6. PROCEDURES

Quality Handbooks usually have detailed sections on the various procedures that are necessary to implement the above program components.

6.1 In some cases, supporting **local policy statements** which have been endorsed by the Board of Trustees or the Ministry, could be included here which deal with:

Staffing – Competencies & Qualifications	Differentiated staffing models
Collection Development	Weeding Procedures
Censorship	Plagiarism
Copyright and Intellectual Freedom	Technology Plans
Bibliography and Citation Guidelines: MLA, APA	Internet Access and Use Guidelines

6.2 **Standardized Processes** include the day to day operations that need to be uniform across the system. Usually there are step-by-step procedures for handling a wide variety of situations. System and/or sample forms will normally be included here. For example

1. Budget management system
2. Acquisition procedures and forms
3. Cataloguing and Processing – Standards and workflow
4. Charging or Circulation systems, and implications
5. Management of the collection activities, e.g. inventory
6. Equipment maintenance procedures and forms
7. Technology plans – Automation systems
8. Technology plans – Computer applications and operations
9. Facilities management
10. Time Management
11. Staff job descriptions – Differentiation
12. Staff evaluation processes and forms

7.3 **Forms Used in the System.** Every agency has a wide variety of forms. It is important, especially for staff new to the system, to be able to access all the forms that have some relationship to SLIS operations. Samples might include:

1. Ordering and acquisition forms
2. Central Media Booking Forms
3. Repair & Maintenance forms
4. Accident reports
5. Requests for various kinds of leave
6. Requests for re-embursement

7.4 **Reports and Reporting** deals with the various kinds of reports that may be generated by the district and the schools to document the effectiveness of the SLIS program. Included in the HANDBOOK could be samples of

1. Day Book in regular and consistent use
2. Progress Reports to Principal – Monthly, Annually, etc.
3. Reports to Staff
4. Reports to Parents

5. Annual Report forms for the System
6. Websites for the library as part of the school and system website
7. Citation formats for all media
8. Templates for sharing Resource-Based Learning Units / Activities
<http://www.edu.pe.ca/bil/>

8. Inter-Agency Collaboration is designed to identify related agencies with which the school is expected to develop cordial working relations. Directories of contact names and addresses, with appropriate website should be provided. Indications of the kinds of services that have can be accessed, guidelines for interaction, and planning forms would be a useful adjunct. There should be a close correlation between IAC and the cooperative planning process.

9. Professional Development Options generally show a variety of patterns for individuals to follow a variety of career paths in the system

- 9.1 Alternative career paths
- 9.2 Institution Training Programs: College or University
- 9.3 Local District Inservice Program
- 9.4 Travel grants, awards, and prizes
- 9.5 How to Organize a Workshop
- 9.6 How to Arrange and Author Visit
- 9.7 How to Facilitate a Technology Fair
- 9.8 Distance Education options

10. Supporting Documents / Appendices provides a section to include

- 10.1 Map of the system, and how it fits into large jurisdictions
- 10.2 Brochures from Central or District supporting agencies
- 10.3 Flow chart and Directory of central office personnel
- 10.4 Directory of SLIS building personnel in the various sites of the system
- 10.5 Membership lists of various Standing and Ad Hoc SLIS committees
- 10.6 Directory of union officers
- 10.7 Job descriptions for Central support staff
- 10.8 Listing of National and International Association documents
 - e.g. IFLA Manifesto <http://www.ifla.org>
 - e.g. specific website that reflect parallel philosophies and approaches
<http://www.iasl-slo.org>

8. Who produces the Handbook ??

Under the leadership of the Director of School Library and Information Services the Handbook will be developed. Some sections will be written by the Director. Some sections will be provided by other Agencies, and edited to fit the style.

If the system is highly **centralized**, many of the decisions will be made from the head office, and the results will be passed down to the schools.

Some systems might even '**contract out**' the writing of such a document. In general this is the least effective method of evolving the handbook, since generally the staff has little ownership for what is produced.

Other systems might be prepared to take a longer time frame to produce the document and use a series of **Committees** made up of **the teacher-librarians, technologists, technicians, clerks and teachers** to draft and edit various sections. The discussion that goes into establishing the procedures and guidelines is an excellent training ground. The team-building that goes on in setting such as this has immeasurable value. Staff need to feel some recognition for the time and effort that is involved in this process. Wise leaders will find ways to provide some release time for Committee members.

In Closing,

The Handbook is a tool. It is a dynamic evolving entity. It cannot remain static. One must continue to revise it on a regular (annual basis). It is highly unlikely that a system will evolve a Handbook that involves all these components either quickly or easily. It is most valuable when it serves as a guide for development, and a reflection of what is being accomplished.

The determination of which parts should appear on the website will relate directly to the degree of access to the technology in the system. All this material may be mounted and displayed. The important part is the ownership that the school building level staff have for the information in the documents, and the degree to which they will use it.

Learning is a process; recording that process is progress.



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